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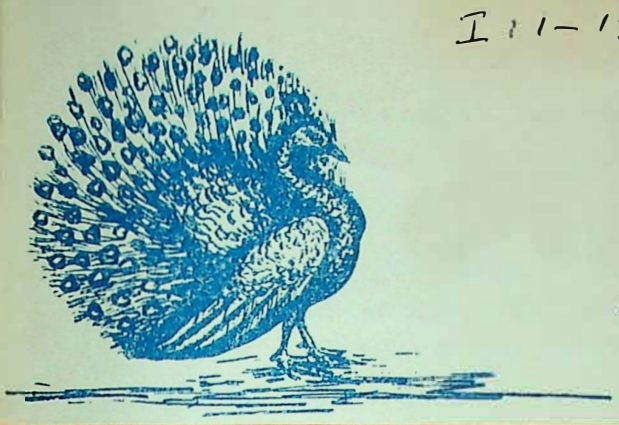

MAYURA

Newsletter of the Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh

Vol.1 APRIL, 1980 No.1

666

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BIRD WATCHERS' CLUB OF ANDHRA PRADESH

January, 12th 1980 is an important day for all the bird enthusiasts of Andhra Pradesh, as it was on that day the Andhra Pradesh Bird Watchers' Club came into existence as a voluntary non-official organisation devoted to the conservation of an important part of our environment. On that day a few bird enthusiasts from the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University, Forest Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, and a few from other walks of life met under the Chairmanship of Sri A.K.Mathur, I.F.S., Additional Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Andhra Pradesh and formed the Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh with the following objectives:

1. To encourage bird watching as a hobby among the young and old.
2. Conservation of Bird fauna. Birds of
3. To facilitate identification of this region.
4. To spread the message of usefulness and importance of birds to mankind.

The Club was inaugurated by Dr.B.H.Krishna Murthy Rao, Principal, College of Agriculture, Rajendranagar.

Under the auspices of the Club so far three field trips were arranged to identify and study the bird fauna in and around Hyderabad. The first one was to the Public Gardens, the second to Vanasthali and the third to Shamirpet. It was during the visit to Vanasthali that the members were thrilled to watch the ever active and noisy migratory Rosy Pastors in thousands. A rare nest of Short-Toed Eagle with a single nestling in it was also located in the Vanasthali. The members are now able to identify more birds species, thanks to the able guidance of Sri Pushp Kumar, and Capt. N.S.Tyabji, I.N.(Retd.); Hon. Representative, World Wild Life Fund, India.

In the meeting held on Feb.24th, 1980 it was decided to bring out a monthly newsletter 'MAYURA' of the "Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh". The first issue of * which is now in your hands.

cont....3.

Club now has a membership of 57, representing members from different walks of life including eleven student members. It is hoped that more and more members will join us, especially from the Student Community.

The Club formed with theblessing of Dr. Salim Ali, Ornithologist of International repute and with the participation of well known bird lovers of the State has a long way to go in encouraging bird watching as a hobby among the young and old with the final objective of educating the public on the aesthetic and ecological importance of bird fauna and also its protection and conservation.

For the time being theClub meets once a month. It is hoped to bring out this newsletter everymonth or atleast quarterly depending on the response from bird lovers.

NESTING ACTIVITIES OF THE BAYBACKED SHRIKE - LODI GARDENS NEW DELHI - I.

N.S.Tyabji.

This note is based on record of observations on birds nesting in the Lodi Gardens, New Delhi, during 1962 which also included survival figures, by count, (specie-wise) against total number observed.

However, this Note will deal with observations on the nesting activities of the Baybacked Shrike (Lanius vittatus) from the time of pairing to hatching and just after.

Unfortunately, out of the five nests observed, three were destroyed immediately after the eggs had been laid and I only discovered the other two just a couple of days before I was due to leave Delhi. There had been other breaks in my observations as well and, therefore, all I am going to attempt here is to provide a composite picture of the general pattern of pairing and nesting activity of this species as it emerges from my notes.

31.1.62: Time: 1430. Bright sun but cool.

Two birds seen in company for the first time this year- first on a neem and later babool. Obviously paired, since they kept together for the whole period of observation - 1½ hours. They kept themselves occupied with their normal feeding sallies to the ground but remained in company throughout.

7.3.62: Time: 0700. Chilly with the sun just coming up. Pair seen together about 40' up on an Eucalyptus (most uncommon as these birds normally prefer lower branches of small trees and are seldom seen perched higher than 20' from ground). One of the birds, presumably the male was singing loudly but most pleasantly, including in its sound a number of other bird-calls. Its companion was altogether silent during this performance. The male bird, however, seemed greatly excited and kept turning towards its companion in jerky movements as it poured out its heart in ecstatic song. The birds kept following each other from branch to branch (in no particular order) and eventually took wings together and were lost to view. Total period of observation about 20 minutes.

10.3.62: Time 0730 (approx.)

Single birds seen on the higher branches of trees (mostly at the top) singing loudly and delightfully with other bird calls woven into the song. Could this be an invitation?

16.3.62: Time: 0735 (approx.)

Pair seen collecting nesting material - long strands stripped off green vine stems. Both birds made two sorties each within a period of about 15 minutes to the same vine. The bird would perch onthe stem, neatly'open' up a thin strip from as far up as possible and then, after opening up about 6" to 8" take to wing pulling out a strip from about 18" to 24" long.

On the second visit a Tree Pie (Dendrocitta Vagabunda) was noticed perched on a nearby neem and was subjected to a lightening attack by both shrikes. The Tree Pie

contd...5.

happened to be just above me and I heard distinct sound of pecking as the birds attacked on the first run. However, this did not seem to worry the Tree Pie much and he only took to wing, with some show of dignity, as the Shrikes came in for the second attack. It was chased for a short distance after which the Shrikes returned to the vine for some more building material.

It is possible that the attack on the Tree Pie may have been prompted by the instinctive need to prevent disclosure of the nest site?

13.4.62: Time 0800 (approx.)

First completed nest observed in a horizontal fork of one of the lower branches of an Apricot tree about 7' from ground level.

Nest typical of species - made of soft grasses, cobwebs etc. It was discovered by chance as bird was observed to enter thick overhanging foliage, so contrary to, its normal habit. Bird left tree soon after, and I spotted the nest immediately I walked under the tree - it was untended at the time. About 15 minutes later I observed a bird sitting in the nest but it left soon after. Though the nest was well hidden from outside, it could be easily spotted as soon as you went under the canopy; the tree itself was in the middle of open and well frequented lawns. The nest was found destroyed a few days later.

(To be continued in next issue)

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON BIRDS IN VANASTHALI

S. Tej Kumar.

On February, 24th I went along with other members of the Bird Watchers' Club to Mahaveer Harin Vanasthali on the outskirts of Hyderabad situated on the National High way to Vijayawada. The 200 acres of enclosed park of scrub country backed by the 2000 acres of scrub forest was set up primarily to restock the fast depleting Black buck. More than 56 species of birds are known to inhabit the park.

The first bird we saw once we were safely away from the

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The first bird we saw once we were safely away from the

The first bird we saw once we were safely away from the " friendly butting " Blackbuckwas the Rosy Pastor. It is a migrant from Central Asia and feeds on the nectar of beautiful flowers of Flame of the forest trees(Butea monosperma). We saw groups of them flying from one tree to another.

The highlight of the trip was the spotting of a Short-toed Eagle's nest site this Eagle not generally known to nest there. It is a brown Eagle, white below the breast with brown streaks. One of the parent Eagle was perched on a high branch of the Butea tree. Just below it on a fork of the tree in a nest we saw a single nestling, white and fluffy.

We also saw a Pigmy Woodpecker on another Butea tree with a group of Pastors. The other birds observed were the Rufousbacked Shrike, Jungle and Large Grey Babblers, Little Brown Dove, a pair of Blackwinged Kites, Paraiah Kites, Purple and Purpled rumped Sunbirds, Redstart (a migrant from Europe), Whitebreasted Kingfisher, Long-tailed grass warblers and a pair of Indian Peafowls left in the park. As we drove through the park we found 3 pairs of Vultures, a pair of Kestrels and Paraiah Kites soaring high over the area.

From what has been gathered from the authorities it can be noted that the park offered an excellent example of rejuvenation of a dwindling forest area meant to form a part of green belt around the city, which has already started the attracting the depleting bird fauna of different species.

BIRD WATCHING AT LAKSHAMAPUR LAKE:

N.Shivnarayan & G.Sudershan Rao.

Lakshmapur lake is a large rain-fed lake located in Achampet taluk, Mahbubnagar Dist. about 135 Kms. South from Hyderabad. This lake has not been explored yet for its avifauna.

The lake is bordered on the northern and eastern sides by deciduous forests and the southern and western banks by villages

It has resident and migratory birds. Thebird & fauna of the lake comprise of Pintail, Wigeon, Shoveller, Spotbill, Bluewinged Teal, Redcrested Pochard, Dabchick, Cotton Teals, and Coot. Besides the Water Birds the other birds identified here are Whitenecked Stork, Large Egret, Redwattled, Lapwing, Sandpiper (common), Kestrel, Whiteback Vulture, GullBilled Tern, Redvented Bulbul, House Crow, House Sparrow, Black Ibis and Black Drongo,

On our way back from Lakshmapur village we spotted a single grey heron and a few Whitebreasted Waterhen and Indian Moorhen at Kummarampalli Tank about 5 Kms. from Amrabad.

RANDOM OBSERVATIONS ON THE JUNGLE CROW

Indira Satyamurty.

It was interesting to watch the behaviour of a pair of Jungle Crows while they were nesting. The pair which I observed, both male and female shared the beauty of feeding their nestling. They were observed to store their food in the crop which was quite obvious to naked eye. Inveriably the pair rested for about half an hour at about 10.30 a.m., bathed in the pond under the tree and preened themselves.

They sometimes hid bits of food in covered holes in the ground that they dugx with their beaks.

Once the single nestling which I was observing flew out of the nest and became more independent, the parents began making another nest. Heavy rains spoiled their second nest constructed in the same season. Before the rains sabotaged the nest the fledgling of the first nest hopped about the nest very curiously.

Two pairs of both Crows both nesting in the garden kept to their defined territories. While the one which had its nest in south-west direction got its food from southward direction and the other which nested in the north loked for foodin the north-westeern direction. I never saw them cross over the others territory.

THE WHITENECKED STORK AT HIMAYATSAGAR

G. Sudershan Rao.

On 26th February, I visited the Himayatsagar, 16 Kms. from Hyderabad. I reached the Sagar at 5-00 p.m. and noticed that the sky was clear. A Whitenecked Stork about the size of the Vulture was hovering over the rocky hills that stand just behind the Sagar.

When it settled on a hill I observed with my 7 x 50 field glasses. Its white neck was very conspicuous and it was alone. I noticed its black body, black bill, white neck and red legs. I checked again the figure given in " The Book of Indian Birds " by Salim Ali and confirmed that it was a Whitenecked Stork, (Ciconia-episcopus).

As the bird was not found in that region next day it was concluded that the bird rested there for a while during its local journey from one Tank to another.

It will be of interest if any other bird watcher can provide further information about this bird in the Himayatsagar area.

COURTING BEHAVIOUR OF ROSERINGED PARAKEET IN THE FIELD

Abida Wahab

The male Roseringed Parakeet has a rose colour and black band. The female has an indistinct green ring around the neck. These birds usually court in the evenings, the one which I observed being between 5 & 6 p.m.

The pair observed on the 11th February at Ramanthapur was perched on a branch of a Tamarind Tree. The male uttered a pleasant murmuring call as he scratched the head of the female and simultaneously raised his left leg. This was kept up for 3 minutes, after which they flew away.

" A Bird Watcher is a rather odd person who derives satisfaction from seeking out and correctly naming our feathered friends and then prying into their private lives "

BEHAVIOUR OF HOUSE CROW (CORVUS SPLENDENS) DURING THE SOLAR ECLIPSE

R.C.Joshi

On the eclipse day (16th Feb.1980) I observed the unusual behaviour of the House Crows. Prior to the eclipse their activites were normal but during the eclipse about 100 - 150 of them were flying in the sky. None of them were resting on the tree and instead of their usual cawing, they emitted a frightening sound like ' Caaa-Caaa-Caaa'. An hour or so after the eclipse they calmed down and returned to their tree.

This observation was made in Himayatnagar region of Hyderabad city. The sky was partly cloudy just before the eclipse but was clear at the time of totality. The period of observation was from 14th Feb. to 18th Feb. 1980.

A SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - I

Pushp Kumar

INTRODUCTION: Most of the authentic data that till now was available on the birds of the State is based on two systematic surveys carried out 15 years ago for the different parts of the State. The first one was the Verney expedition which covered the fauna of the Eastern Ghats of the then Madras Presidency in 1929. This survey covered most of the present Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore Districts. The second systematic survey was carried out by Dr.SalimAli in 1930-32 for the then Hyderabad State and covered the present Adilabad, Nizamabad, Medak, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, Nalgonda, Hyderabad and Mahbubnagar Dists. of Andhra Pradesh. Besides these there have been sporadic reports by Col.Sparrow in the 19th Century on his observations around Secunderabad and Yeshwantpur (?); a checklist of thebirds collected in the Eastern Ghats by a team of Bombay Natural History Society workers including Krishna Raju of Visakhapatnam; Prof.Neelkantan's report on the Pelicans of Kolleru; a list of birds of the Eastern Ghats by Trevor Price and a few others. As a consequence the literature cited on

the birds found in Andhra Pradesh remains opaque.

The present survey attempts to collate this data and seeks to extend in number of places by personal observations and notes recorded over a number of years.

Of the twenty orders listed in the Hand Book for the birds of Indian Sub-continent as many as 18 orders are represented in Andhra Pradesh. Those r not represented being Gaviiformes i.e., Divers and Loons and Procellariformes i.e., Petrels and Sherwaters. Both these orders are limited mostly to oceanic islands and open oceans.

Of the 76 families listed in the Hand Book as many as 62 are represented in Andhra Pradesh.

Of the 2100 species and sub-species listed in the Hand Book over 450 occur in the State. These are dealt with family-wise. The Taxanomic sequence followed is based on the Hand Book.

GREBES: Grebes are small acquatic birds found swimming alertly chiefly in the lakes and tanks with much emergent vegetation. They have a soft rudimentary tail and sharp pointed bill (unlike Ducks). Sexes are alike. The Grebe family Podicipilidae is represened by three species in the Indian Sub-continent. Of these two are represented in Andhra Pradesh. The Great Crested Grebe Podiceps cristatus, Linn. has not been reported to date.

1. BLACK NECKED GREBE: Podiceps nigricollis nigricollis:

A squat alert bird observed on fresh water reservoirs in Visakhapatnam (Tatipudi Reservoir) and in Srikakulam Dist. (Large tank north of the National High way beyond Ranasthalam). The sightings were made over a period of three years during February and March.

The dark plumage on the top with blackneck and white plumage below and upturned pointed beak held alertly identifies this bird. It is seen usually in winter months. This incidentally extends the occurence of this species to Andhra Pradesh.

2. LITTLE GREBE or DABCHICK: Podiceps ruficollis.

Telugu name " Munugudu Bathu; Urdu name "Pandubi.

A small brown Grebe with redneck and buff under parts is found in most of the lakes and tanks throughout the State of Andhra Pradesh. An alert bird seen bobbing on water one second and s disappearing the next. Though resident, the numbers are augumented by migrants in winter.

(To be continued)

BIRDS SIZE IN TERMS OF WEIGHT

Compiled by A.V.Ramanacharyulu.

The studies of avian biologists and ornithologists start with the size of the birds. The size is usually taken into account in terms of linear measurement i.e. length of birds from beak to tail or head to toes, height etc. These measurements seem inadequate for the technical data needed to solve certain problems. Thus scientists began taking birds weight into account. The weight indicates the food habits of the bird thereby helping the scientists to get certain details.

The weight of the birds is very important in analysing the factors that influence differences in species diversity between communities.

The observations on birds including the weight taken with adequate data (the sample size of 10 or more of adults of each sex, time and period at which taken, sample of geographic locations, with the mean, standard deviation and Range.) will give an accurate assessment particularly with experiments of ringing or migration biology and in exploring the efficacies of bio-communities.

(Ref: T George A Clark Jr. Body Weight of Birds A Review ' Condor ' October, 1979)

Our birds and animals and the forests they live in are disappearing fast. Four million hectares of forests have been cut down in twenty-five years. Conservation is an urgent need, warns DULEEP MATTAI of World Wildlife Fund-India.

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Sri. Kamal Naidu, "
Shri. M.N.Babu "
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Sri. B.C. Choudhury
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FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION AMONG MEMBERS

For contribution of articles to MAYURA and membership of the Club please address to Dr. S. Tej Kumar, Convenor, Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh, Assistant Professor in Entomology, College of Agriculture, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-500 030 . AP.

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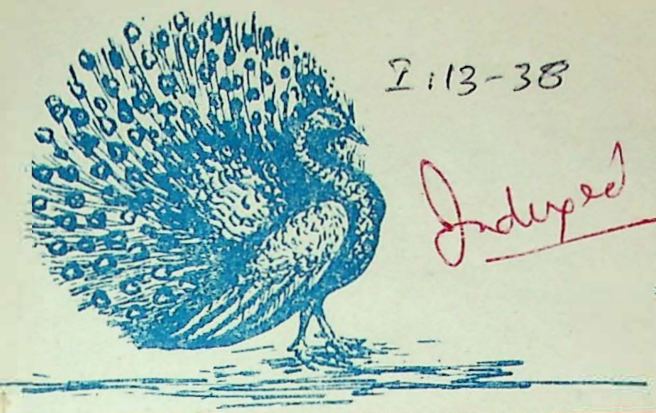

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MAYURA

Newsletter of the Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh

Vol. 1 JULY, 1980 No.2

MAYURA WELCOMES CONSERVATIONISTS

'MAYURA' - the Newsletter of the Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh - appeared amongst the conservation c conscious persons in April, 1980. The response to this modest beginning has been highly encouraging and it is hoped that 'MAYURA' will help develop a sense of appreciation of the conservation efforts of not just the avifauna but also of the Nature as a whole.

While 'MAYURA' was busy organising activities for the members of the club, the news reached that a Seminar on WILDLIFE RESOURCES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT is being organised jointly by the FAO, Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation, Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University and the Central Crocodile Breeding and Management Training Institute, Hyderabad from 7 - 11 July, 1980 in Hyderabad with delegates coming from several South East Asia countries. MAYURA considers this as a major development in the country and while welcoming the delegates to the Seminar wishes the function a grand success.

The second isssue of 'MAYURA' is being released commemorating the inaugural session of the Seminar and it is hoped that by so doing we are giving a glimpse of the activities of the club and MAYURA to an international audience. We also hope that with good wishes of all conservationists MAYURA will go ahead persuing the message of conservation to one and all.

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OBITUARY

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WITH PROFOUND GRIEF WE RECORD THE SAD DEMISE OF OUR ESTEEMED MEMBER SRI RAJA SURABHI VENKATA JAGANNADHA RAO, RAJA OF JATPROLE, MAHBOOBNAGAR DISTRICT,(A.P.) AT KOLHAPUR ON 23-6-1980. HE WAS AN EMINENT WILDLIFE AND BIRD PHOTOGRAPHER AND WAS RECIPIENT OF MANY AWARDS.

MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE

SOLAR ECLIPSE-NOTES ON BEHAVIOURAL OBSERVATIONS OF WATER BIRDS:

8 15

S. ASHOK KUMAR, I.A.S.

After a rapid survey of some villages, Thummalagudem village in Ramannapet taluk, Nalgonda district was selected chiefly because the roosting and feeding grounds are within four furlongs facilitating easy coordination between the teams. In fact the roosting place was visible from our observation post.

Thummalagudem village is located 48 K.Ms from the line of total eclipse. The village tank fed by Musi river is a variatable haven for multitude of birds, notably the egrets and herons.

The team consisting of myself, Mr.V.Ramachandra Rao, Lecturer, Department of Zoology, Nagarjuna Government College and Mr.Y.Shyamsunder Reddy, B.Sc., Second Year Student of the same College moved to the village on 13th February and kept a close watch on the movement of Cattle egrets and located their roost in a grove comprising Babul Trees (Acacia Arabica) and Tamrind Trees (Tamarindus-Indicus). No nest's were found at the roosting place.

The next day evening the team, stationed at a vantage point on the tankbund, had a commanding view of both the feeding grounds, namely tank bed and paddy fields. When the digital watch blinked 5.40 PM, small groups of cattle egrets and little egrets started leaving the shallow tank and flew northwards towards their roosting place. Those feeding in the paddy fields also flew in the direction of the same roosting place. Some of the Cattle egrets directly landed on the branches while some circled over the grove twice or thrice

before landing. By 6.00 PM Pond herons started arriving at the roosting place. It is a mixed colony of Cattle egrets, Little egrets, Pond herons and Grey herons. No sooner they landed, the egrets started producing low grating croak and the crescendo increased gradually as more and more arrived to roost. The treetops looked over-crowded and some egrets were seen packing at each other. Some birds flew from one tree top to another before finally settling down. The pond herons with their characteristic neck-pulled-in posture were silhouetted against the crimson red sky. The quackle of egrets and Pond herons in chorus almost drowned the chatter of common mynahs and the screaming "Keek" of parrots. By 6.45 PM the noise of Pond herons subsided followed by mynahs. The egrets ranked last in ceasing their vocalisation. The bird chorus lasted for nearly 30 minutes before silence and darkness envoloped the scene.

On 15th, the next day we reached the roosting place by 5.29 A.M. and selected a vantage point for observation. Our stealthy movements and light focussing caused alarm in the colony for few seconds but it subsided as quickly as it was aroused. In the twilight we could perceive the profile of the birds perched on tree tops painted white. As darkness melted, the stars became dull. The first call of Cattle egrets was recorded at 5.49 A.M. At 6.01 A.M. the first call of mynahs were recorded. With the day breaking at 6.15 A.M. the entire seanary became clearly visible. The first egret took off at 6.17 A.M and flew directly towards the tank. At 6.19 A.M. the egrets flew off in small parties, some heading towards the green paddy fields and some towards the tank, their favourite feeding ground. By 6.35 A.M. the entire colony of egrets and herons had left the roosting place.

contd..P..3..

We proceeded to our observation post erected in the foreshore of the tank and watched the following birds till mid-day.

1) Little Egrets. (Egretta Garzetta) and Cattle Egrets (Babulcus coromandus)

These birds have congregated at the centre of the water spread area dotted with reeds and vocalised for about 30 minutes. Later they spread out towards the tank margin for foraging. A few flew from one area of the tank to another.

2) Blackwinged Stilts. (Himantopus himantopus)

Several parties of blackwinged stilts, scattered along the water front were probing frequently into the muddy bottom with head and neck submerged at a steep angle and hind part of body sticking out like a duck "upending". The black wings, white head, neck and breast, and long crimson red legs render their identification easy. While flying low over the tank, one can see its blackwings weakly flapping, extended neck and the long legs trailing beyond the tail. Their vocalisation is comparatively less noisy than the egrets.

3) Darters. (Anhinga rufa)

Amidst the egrets were three darters, identified by their black bodies with grey streaks, whitish neck, long cormorant-like tail and pointed dagger bill. They were hunting singly and appear to be individualistic.

4) White-eyed Pochard (Aythya nyroca)

Yonder on the grassy tank margin, three rufous brown pochards landed, and few minutes later, they flew off flashing their conspicuous whitish wing bars.

5) Little Stints (Celidris minutus)

Flocks of Little Stints flew swiftly in a compact mass near the water front. Their mottled brown bodies, blackish legs and bills with white underside visible as they turn and twist in unison were unmistakable.

6) Fantail Snipes. (Capella Gallingeo)

Scattered among the blackwinged stilts and Little Stints were Fantail snipes probing into soft mud with their long slender bills near the tank margin.

7) Pond herons. (Ardeola gravii)

Several pond herons were feeding near the reeds and partly submerged rocks. While in flight, their glistening white wings, tail and rump flash into prominence.

8) Grey herons (Ardea cimerea)

Number of grey herons were found in the company of egrets, foraging. Their ashy grey body, pointed yellow dagger bill, S shaped neck and long legs help us in easy identification.

9) White breasted Water hen (Amauroruls phoenicurus)

Two pairs of White breasted waterhens were feeding near the reeds. As they moved and turned, their white breast and the erect stumpy tail showing the chest-nut coloured underneath were prominently visible.

10) Dabchicks (Podiceps ruficollis)

At the centre of the water spread area were about six dabchicks vanishing below thesurface quite rapidly and surfacing some distance away.

In the evening at 5.30 we reached the roosting place. Little egrets and Cattle egrets started arriving either singly or in small groups. Huge flocks arrived at 6.20 P.M. and circling over the area thrice, they alighted on the tree tops like swarms of locusts. Soon after, they indulged in low-key vocalisation. Parties of Pond herons perched on Babul trees to our right quacked occassionelly. At 7.00 P.M. the vocalisation subsided, and the still silence that followed the dusk indicated that the birds have retired finally.

On the momentous Solar Eclipse day names 16th February,1980 we got up with great expectations and hopes and made to the roosting place by 5.00 A.M. The scene was still, calm and silent except our occassional whispers. We heard the first quacking call of Pond heron at 5.54 A.M. The twilight came at 5.56 A.M. and we could see the outlines of trees and the hillock in the back ground locally called Indrapala gutta. At 5.57 A.M. two or three egrets uttered deep harsh croak. There was occasional chirping and hooting of owls from the distant trees. As the twilight slowly advanced, the white tree tops were faintly visible. The egrets and Pond herons continued their occasional vocalisation. At 6.17 A.M. the Little egrets and later the Cattle egrets started to fly either singly or in groups of 2,3,4,7 etc. A minute later, a mixed flock of egrets and Pond herons took off. The graceful flight of egrets with slow wing beatings was clearly visible against the grey sky. At 6.19 A.M. another flock chiefly consisting of Pond herons and few egrets took off. A third group of Pond herons took to wings at 6.23 A.M. Small parties of pond herons were seen leaving at 6.27 A.M. and 6.29 A.M. By 6.33 A.M. the entire colony of birds has left for their favourite feeding grounds. The roosting place looked desolate. We recorded the actual sun rise between 6.40 A.M. and 6.44 A.M.

..P.. ..

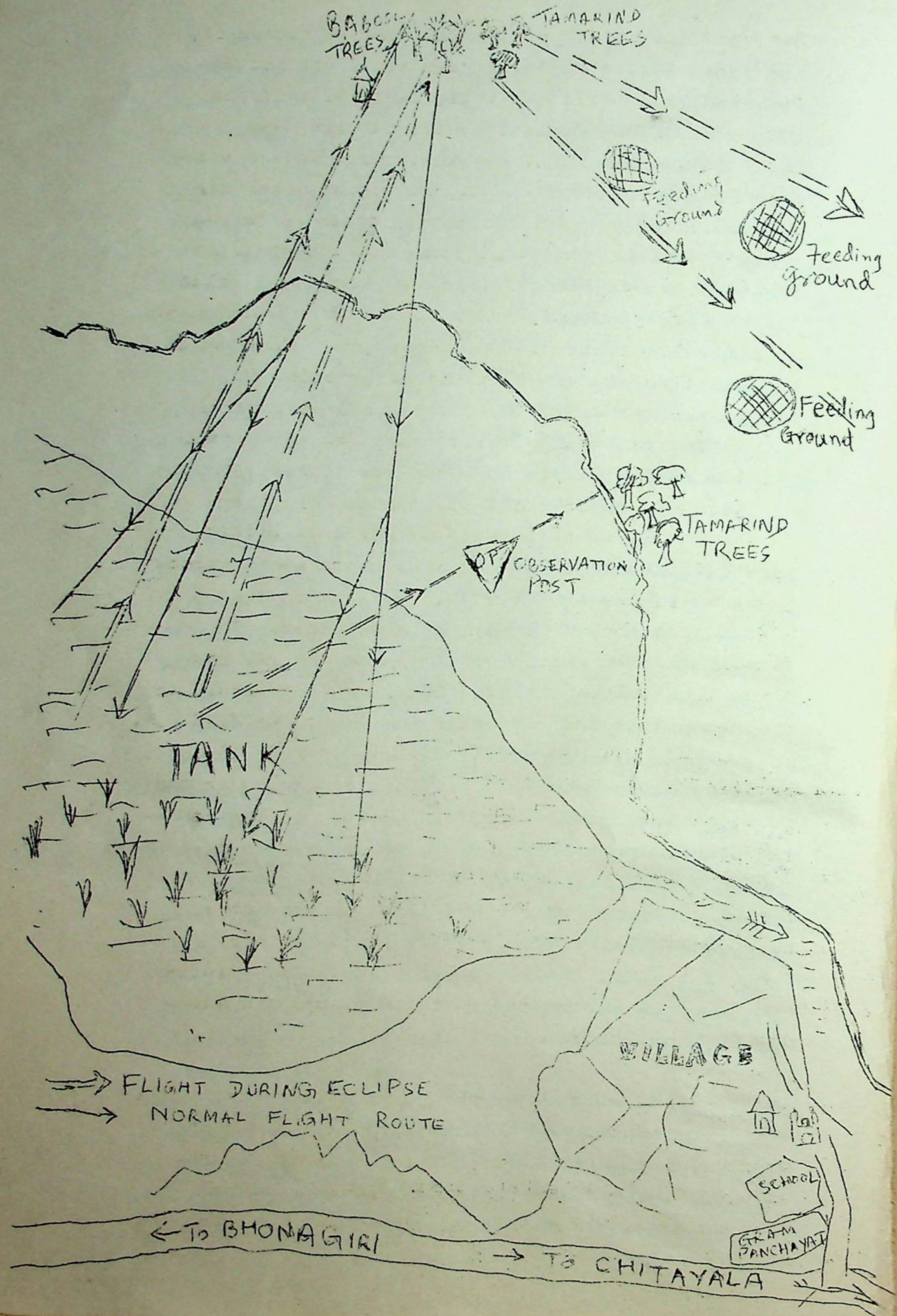
We reached the Observation Post by 7.12 A.M. and stationed ourselves very near the edge of the water-spread area. The sky was clear and the weather fine. The birds had collected in two groups at the southern end of the tank margin. The larger group consisted of Little egrets, Cattle egrets and a sprinkling of Grey herons. The smaller group consisting of 30 egrets had assembled near the reeds, about 150 yards from us. Since 7.12 A.M., they have been vocalising. At 9.36 A.M. the bigger group slowly thinned out spreading evenly towards North and West. At 11.10 A.M. a small party of Cattle egrets came from the direction of the fields and alighted on the Tamarind trees abutting the tank bund. A little later mother group arrived and landed on the same trees. As the sun became severe, some Cattle egrets moved to the tank margin and rested while some flew off and landed on the Tamarind trees.

At 12 Noon, the mercury touched 89°F and by 12.30 P.M. it shot up to 90°F. Egrets standing in water were still feeding while those on the grassy tank margin continued to rest. At 1.00 P.M. the thermometer recorded 90.5°F temperature. Feeding by egrets, Pond herons, Little Stints, blackwinged stilts, Pentail snipes, White-breasted water hens continued. Egrets flew from the Tamarind trees towards the paddy fields while flocks of Little Stints flew low over water. The temperature rose to 92.5°F at 1.30 P.M. but came down to 90°F at 2.00 P.M. When the eclipse began at 2.30 P.M., mercury touched 92.5°F. The sky was still clear and there was no perceptiole change in the activity of Egrets and other weter birds. At 3 P.M. the thermometer recorded 91.5°F. Little stints continued to migrate from one area of the tank to another. The temperature rose by .5°F at 3.10 P.M. and no behavioural changes and abnormal activity was noticed in Cattle egrets, Little egrets, grey herons and other birds. At 3.20 P.M. the eastern sky which was a

hue of light grey and crimson red became dull and the thermometer recorded 89.5°F. No changes were noticed in bird activity at 3.30 P.M. when the mercury touched 88.5°F. There was dawn twilight effect at 3.40 P.M. and the temperature abruptly came down to 86.5°F. No abnormal activity was noticed in the birds. At 3.45 P.M. the sky became duller and, near darkness abruptly enveloped the whole scene at exactly 3.46 P.M., when the thermometer recorded 84°F. There was wild animation and excitement in our Camp and all of us rushed out to witness the total eclipse, one of the mysteries of mother Nature. The sun was a black disc on fire. It was nature's grandest display of colours, a fantastic and spectacular event in one's life time.

The darkness was awesome and inspiring. Planets Venus and Mercury were distinctly visible in the firmament which was clear during the whole phase of totality. The effect or Corona was fantastic and beyond description. The egrets and herons abruptly took to wings, and flew in the direction of the roosting place. The groups flew directly to the Tamarind trees on the tank bund. It was unmistakable that the birds flew restlessly, but vocalisation was distinctly absent. We noticed crows overhead heading towards the village. All the villagers were staying indoors and no one dared to come out. No domestic animals were seen outside. The sun came came out in all brightness at 3.48 P.M. We could clearly see the Egrets and Herons alighting at the roosting place.

Our team member stationed at the roosting place reported that the parrots started chattering at 3.35 P.M. and at 3.47 P.M., flocks of Egrets and Herons arrived and circled over the area twice or thrice. While they were preparing to land, the


BABOOL TREES
TAMARIND TREES
Feeding Ground
Feeding Ground
Feeding Ground
TAMARIND TREES
OP
OBSERVATION POST
TANK
VILLAGE
SCHOOL
GRAM PANCHAYAT
FLIGHT DURING ECLIPSE
NORMAL FLIGHT ROUTE
← To BHONAGIRI
→ To CHITAYALA

Sun came out in all brightness causing confusion. One party landed on Babul tree tops, another on Tamarind tree while the third party alighted on the nearby paddy fields. While circling the birds looked restless. However, there was no vocalisation indicating fright. Two groups which circled over the place of roosting, returned to the shallow tank as sudden light bathed the whole landscape. The brilliance of light after total eclipse was as abrupt as the near darkness at the beginning of the eclipse. At 3.49 P.M. one group alighted at the roosting place. The thermometer recorded 86°F temperature at 4.00 P.M. Nearly half the birds which flew to their place of roosting were still visible as white dots on green tree tops. About 100 yards from our observation post near the sluice canal, we noticed three pairs of little Egrets fighting and making loud noice when attracted a small party of Egrets. We watched the Egrets jumping and pecking at each other. The fighting lasted nearly five minutes and all the birds flew away. A little later, they returned to the same place and reenacted the fight. At 4.28 P.M. We saw one party of egrets taking off from the roosting place and after circling returning to the paddy fields. Only very few remained at the roosting place.

During the actual period of total eclipse other birds like Blackwinged Stilts, Little Stints, Fantail Snipes, Teals, Dabchicks and White Breasted water hens remained in the tank and did not display any obnormal activity.

At 5.50 P.M. we reached the place of roosting which was empty. Pond herons were the first to start arriving either singly or in small parties at 6.06 P.M. A flock of egrets and grey herons arrived at 6.10 P.M. A second group of Pond herons

came at 6.16 P.M. At 6.30 P.M. a huge flock of Little Egrets and Cattle Egrets came from the tank feeding ground, circled and landed on the Babul trees. Soon after, they started vocalisation in low tone. Another flock arrived three minutes later followed by a second. The vocalisation increased in intensity. The last group landed at 6.38 P.M. and by 7.00 P.M. the birds became silent and settled down for the night.

We returned to the roosting place on 17th morning to continue our observations. At 5.49 A.M. we recorded the first call of cattle Egret. The low tone croaks mixed with occasional quacking of Pond Herons could be heard till 6.10 A.M. At 6.12 A.M. one Egret took off and flew southwards towards the tank followed by another. Three minutes later, the third, fourth and fifth took off. From 6.16 A.M. small groups of Egrets started off, one after another. Pond herons startd singly and in small groups at 6.25 A.M. and by 6.35 A.M. all thebirds had gone leaving the roosting place totally empty. Before, finally departing from our observation post, we had a last look at the multitude of water birds actively foraging in the shallow tank.

The following are the interesting sidelines of our observations of bird behaviour.

(a) Little Egrets are the most vociferous and while in company, indulge in occasional packing and fighting. Cattle Egrets are less noisy and quarrelsome. Pond herons have not been seen fighting.

(b) Most of the time, little Egrets and Cattle Egrets hunt in company. As the sume beoomes more and more severe, they fan out to the tank margin and indulge in occasional foraging.

(c) Grey Herons hunt in small groups and they have not been found fighting.

(d) Grey Herons, little Egrets and Cattle Egrets roost in mixed colonies in the same trees while Pond Herons roost separately.

(e) Egrets are the early risers followed by Grey Herons.

(f) Pond Herons wake up first but leave the roost last.

(g) Pond Herons arrive late and leave the roost late

(h) Pond Herons hunt individually but roost in a colony.

(i) It is strange coincidence that exactly at 6.17 A.M. the Egrets start flying singly or in small parties of 2,3,4,7 etc.

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DURING MARCH, 1980 :

The members of the club visited Shamirpet tank situated about 30 k.m. away from Hyderabad on March, 16 1980 to watch birds. More than 35 species of birds were bbserved. The members were delighted to observe Open-billed Storks, black winged stilts, grey herons egrets, blue winged teals, a single brown headed seagull, and harriers (pale and march) along with other birds. They have also visited drive-in deer park which harboured Red-winged Bush lark, Long-tailed grass warblers, Ashy crowns, and singing bush larks. The area was found to be very excellant place to watch many birds. Shamirpet is famous for partridges, though we could not observe any as it was already late in the morning when we arrived in park.

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SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH: = 2

PUSHP KUMAR

Pelicans:(Family pelecanidae) Pelicans are large (size 152 to 173 cm) stocky aquatic birds white, rosy to grey in colour with large wings capable of strong flight, they have short and stout feet which are webbed. The bill is long and hooked at the tip. The lower mandible is under hung with a gular pouch of naked skin. This feature is a well known characteristic of the birds. It is used by the birds in fishing; fish being their main food. Fishing is done by a cooperative effort i.e., a group will swim in a crescent shaped formation and drive fish into shallow water where they are then scooped up with the capacious bill. Pelicans are mainly aquatic birds and look graceful while swimming. On land they are ungainly. They may nest in trees or on the ground in association with other species.

In India 2 species and 3 sub-species of Pelicans are reported.

In Andhra Pradesh 2 species have been reported. The more common and well known being the spot billed or grey pelican (pelecanus philippensis).

White & Rosy Pelican:(Pelecanus onocrotelus Linnaeus) Local Name: None known, possibly Gudabatu or Gudakonga or Kollati Konga in Telugu as for Grey Pelican. Sighting of this pelican has been reported from Visakhapatnam District. In January, 1973 (an year of drought) a pair were sighted on the Mir Alam Tank near Hyderabad. There have been no other reports. It requires to be determined whether this species visits Andhra Pradesh regularly or is just a straggler.

Spotted-billed or Grey Pelican: Pelecanus phillipponsis philippensis gmelin: Local Names: Urdu, Hindi - Hawasil, Telugu - Gudakonga, Gudabatu, Kolletibatu, Kolleti Konga and Chintabatu etc.

The general colouration of this bird is grey to greyish brown on top and a dirty white below. The feathers on the head forms a crest. The flesh coloured bill has greyish-blue spots on the upper mendible. The gular pouch is greyish-white.

A large pelicanry of this bird located between the villages of Kolamuru and town Undi in West Godavari District was first described in 1958 by Prof.Neelakantam and an account of this pelicanry was published in E.P.Gees "Wild Life of India". In January,1962 this author had visited this pelicanry for observation and collecting a few birds for the Nehru Zoological Park, (then Andhra Pradesh Zoological Park). Photographs of the colony were taken and a movie also made in colour which is perhaps one of the few such records of this pelicanry. The pelicanry was located about 10 Kms. east of the Kolleru lake, and sprawled in that season over an area of 1 Sq.mile roughly covering for the most part (95%) paddy fields.

The birds arrived at the site around end of October (Deepavali) and left around end of March (Ugadi) according to local villagers.

Nests were made on trees growing on the bunds of paddy fields, canal banks etc. The tree species chosen were Raintree (Samania saman) Palmyra palm (Borassus flebelifer), Babool (Acacia arabica), Coconut (Cocas nucifera) and Neem (Azedirachta indica). Most nests were made on palmyra palms on the bunds of fields. Nests were made from sticks and paddy straw. The local farmers on enquiry did not show any resentment of the birds. On the other hand some took us and showed how the fields

under trees on which the birds nested were greener (because of the droppings)

The birds (parents) departed for the Kolleru, a vast shallow freshwater lake about 6-10 Kms. to the west in the morning, and returned between 9 to 10 A.M. Their return would be heralded by a cacophany of sounds from the nestlings. As the birds landed the young ones would call and lunge forward. Their beaks in January were not fully formed and there were no spots on the bill. The gular pouch was also not fully formed. While the young lunged the parent would turn away its head initially and after about 8 to 12 such lunges, it would open its bill. There upon the youngster would reach in right into the parent so much so that the fledglings would almost disappear (atleast the bill and neck) inside the parents and the fish or food engaged by the parent would be gobbled up by the young. Some birds would also fish in the paddies as well as in the drain nearby.

In 1972, I had gone to the area again, but there was no sign of the pelicans anywhere around Kolleru. The causes of this catastrophe are complex and varied relating to the Socio Economic changes that had taken place in the area in this decade. The pelicans paid the price for man's progress.

Though the pelicans abandoned Kolleru, they did not leave Andhra Pradesh. In 1973 they were spotted by me in the Pulicat Lake in Nellore Dist. swimming in fairly shallow water. However their nesting area was not known. In 1979 the eminent naturalist and wild life photographer Mr.M.Krishnan informed in the Indian Board for Wild Life meeting at Delhi that he had seen the birds near Durawarishatra near Sullurpet while travelling in a train and later investi-

gation revealed that there is a heronery in a small village called Nelapattu near Doravarishatra Railway Station. The lead was followed up and thegrey pelican discovered nesting in a mixed heronry on Barringtonia acutangula trees growing in the midst of an irrigation tank. The tank and the surroundings have now been constituted into a Sanctuary.

In 1978 February another colony of grey pelicans was discovered in Talinselapuram village near Tekkali in Srikakulam District. However, the situation is different here. The pelicans nest in company with Painted Stork (Ibis lencocaphalus) on trees in the court yeards of houses of the villagers. Trees occupied were Tamarind (Tamarindus indica), Babul (Acacia arabic), Neem (Azedirachta indica). The villagers go about their business and the birds are not disturbed in any-way.

There are reports of pelicans in Krishna Dist.on the East coast near Tenali etc., However, all these are to be authenticated. Thus it can be said that the grey pelican is found along the east coast in Andhra Pradesh.

Dalmatian Pelican (Pelecanus philippensis crispus Bruch)

There is no definite record of this bird in Andhra Pradesh. However, some birds completely white are also sometimes seen which could be these birds. However this requires specific confirmation.

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SOME RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS:

O.C.EDWARDS, ARPS, EFIAP:

A long time ago, in the campus of the Hyderabad Public School, I was seated in a tree, looking down upon the nest and young of a pair of White headed Babblers (Turdoides striatus - Dumont). The nest was among the fronds of a date-palm. I had tied aside a frond or two to give my remote-controlled camera a better view. The parent birds came, not by themselves as is usually the case, but amongst a whole flock of birds. 'Seven Sisters' or 'Sath Bhai'. I watched carefully the feeding of the young. This was done not only by the two birds which, most probably, were the parents, but also by some of the aunties and uncles!

A couple of years ago, and again this year, while photographing Green Bee-Eaters (Merops orientalis Latham) at their nest-tunnels which may be found on the dry and sandy side of the Hussain Sagar Tank bund, I observed not two but three adult birds bringing insects (almost exclusively dragonflies) and going into the tunnels. However, this year's 'odd-one-out' did not seem to be welcome since, when the rightful pair arrived, it had to decampt

Conclusion? We know that the maternal or paternal instinct is very compelling, but may we assume that it would manifest itself even when a bird or other animal has not produced young or even when it has not paired?

Note: I feel convinced that the young in both the above cases belonged to just one pair.

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AN OBSERVATION ON THE BEHAVIOUR OF SPARROWS DURING SOLAR ECLIPSE:

SMT.AZIZ BANU AND K.KUMUDANATHAN:

An experiment was conducted to see the effect of Solar Eclipse on the behaviour of House Sparrows. For this purpose, about 70 sparrows residing at the backside of the paddy store room of the Agricultural College Farm, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad was selected.

The behaviour of sparrows was observed from 2 P.M. till roosting on 15 February, 1980 (a day prior to eclipse), 16 February 1980 (day of eclipse) and 17 February 1980 (a day after eclipse). The behaviour of the sparrows was found quite normal on the day prior to and after eclipse. On 16 February the Solar Eclipse commenced at about 2.28 P.M. and afterwards they were observed restless. There was no movements of the birds and they stopped feeding. At 3.25 P.M. they gathered in a flock and alighted on the fencing. At the time of complete solar Eclipse (3.45 P.M.), they looked frightened probably due to the sudden onset of evening. They twittered calls and went to their roosts at 3.45 P.M. and felt restlessness.

After the completion of the Solar Eclipse and as the light appeared the sparrows came out from their roost, and flew to different places and commenced feeding once again.

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AN OBSERVATION ON THE BEHAVIOUR OF INDIAN BAYA (PLOCEUS PHILLIPPINUS) IN CAPTIVITY DURING SOLAR ECLIPSES:

T.G.MANMOHAN SINGH:

A Solar Eclipse took place on sixteenth February, this year (1980). With the objective of observing the effect of this near-total eclipse on the Indian Baya in captivity, a small experiment was conducted in the laboratory of ICAR scheme for studies on Biology and Control of Bird pests at Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad.

One bird cage with six bayas was kept inside the laboratory of the research scheme and another cage with the same number of birds was kept in the open backyard of the laboratory building. Ample Quantity of paddy (as food), drinking water and a perching rod were provided in each cage.

The behaviour of the Weaver birds in the two cages was observed one day prior to eclipse (15 th February,1980), on the day of eclipse (16th February, 1980) and on the next day of eclipse (17th February, 1980) from 2.00 to 6.00 p.m. on all three days.

On 16th February,1980, the Solar Eclipse commenced at 2.28 p.m. This had no effect on the bayas in both the cages and they ~~xxxxxx~~ remained normal in their behaviour as they were earlier i.e., following the normal activity of feeding, drinking the water and relaxing for a while on the perching rod in the cage. However, at 3.45 P.M. when it suddenly became dark due to near-complete solar eclipse (99.5% coverage) with a decrease in temperature and gloominess in the atmosphere, creating the impression of onset of evening, the bayas in both cages stopped feeding and drinking water. They all jumped to the perching rod and sat very

close - almost pressing each other. They looked very panicky. This (behaviour) continued till 3.47 P.M. Immediately after, when the sunlight appeared, the bayas left the perching rods and resumed their normal activities, shedding all signs of fear.

The behaviour of the bayas in the two cages was found quite normal during the entire period of observation (2.00 to 6.00 P.M) on the other days of observation i.e., one day prior to eclipse (15th February,1980) and next day of eclipse (17th February,1980)

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DURING APRIL, 1980 :

During the field trip to Chilkoor deer park situated near Osman Sagar tank , west of Hyderabad on April 13, 1980 the members could observe many water birds including a flock of brown headed seagulls numbering 24, Little Cormorants, Darters, Blue winged Teals, Cotton Teals, Median Egrets, and also a yellow wagtail straggler.

In the park of Osman Sagar the members noted Tree pies minivets and a golden oriole.' MAYURA' the Newsletter of the Club was formally released by Shri. Pushp Kumar, Conservator of Forest (Wild life Management). He wished all success to the endeavours of the Club in its efforts in making people conscious of our Natural resources including birds. Later members met and resolved to request the authorities to include a tank situated adjacent to 1000 acre deer park into the park area so as to afford protection to many migratory water birds which are known to come there.

****** *******

FEEDING OF SCALE INSECT BY PURPLE SUNBIRD: (Nectarinia asiatica Latham)

R.C.JOSHI:

During the month of February-March,1980, Sunbirds were seen perching on papaya fruits. On close observation it revealed that the papaya fruits were severely infested with brown coloured scale insects, the female purple sunbirds were feeding on them.

The scale insect was sent to the Commonwealth Institute of Entomology, London for species determination and was identified as Coccus hesperidum (L)

This observation was taken at Hyderabad and clearly depicts the role of purple sunbird as a biocontrol agent.

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SLUGS AS FOOD FOR THE GREY SHRIKE:

S. TEJ KUMAR:

While watching birds during February and March, 1980 in A.P.Agricultural University Campus I found a Grey Shrike ususally perched on a Babool tree located in a bushy area. I was curious to docatethe larger on which it generally impales excess prey killed. Even though many White Babool (Accasia Leucofloea) trees were present in the viscinity I could not find any prey being impaled on then or on Babool (Accasia arabica). Further observations revealed that the shrike used another thorny bush Canthium parviflorum (Vruksha gandini or Bharuvaaji in Sanskrit or Belusa in Telugu) for impaling garden slugs (Limax sp) which was not reported in earlier literature. It would be interesting to know from other members about the slugs as food of shrikes.

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ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SEX RATIOS OF THE PEAFOWL: (Pavo cristatus)

INDRA KUMAR SHARMA:

Sex ratios in animals have vital role in population dynamics, higher female ratio of a species highly increases population growth potentiality of the population at the biotope. I studied ecological aspects of sex ratios of the peafowl at different typical environmental biotopes around Jodhpur to find relation of sex ratios with environmental factors.

The table-1 shows that sex ratio of peacock at an average green plain biotope is about 1.4:1 to 1:1, at a dry biotope cock ratio gets higher upto double or even more 2. 4:1, but it reverses to 1:1.4 to 1:2 in biotopes where there is much feeding of food grains by the local men. It is also notable that at off-set biotopes only one to three peacocks occur without any peahen there, it happens so as the peacock is hardy and few peacocks emigrate to a nearby area to avoid food competition; as peahens cannot live at hard biotopes these do not emigrate to hardy biotopes. It is mencion worthy than the peacock has home range upto 1.5 Km or more but the peahen has upto 0.75 Km only. This also leads the peacock to emigrate. It was also noted that sex ratio of the peafowl population changes with season by migration of peahens to more green area or migration of peacocks to close by area to reduce competition for food as discussed earlier. In the drought season sex ratio of peahens increases at green areas and decreases at semiarid areas but return to previous ratio in the next rainy season.

Chicken of the peafowl does not show sexual diamorphism till six months old, so sex ratio could not be determined of a whole brood at the early age; later many chicken of a brood are killed by predators, so sex ratio of complete brood could not be investigation. Sex ratio among six months old brood was found 1:1 and 1:3 mode, 1:2 mean, it is almost reverse of sex ratio among adults, this reflects that peahens (female) ratio decreases with age span in the peafowl. The first cause of that I found that considerable number of peahens are killed by predators while peahens incubating their clutches on the ground. The second reason I observed was that age span of the peahen is shorted (in Jodhpur Zoo, average life span of the peahen was 4 to 5 years and of the peacock 6 to 7 years or more. The peacock is more hardy surviving for longer time, so its sex ratio grows higher at later age.

TABLE - I

Sex ratio of the peafowl at some typical biotopes in Jodhpur district in October, 1979

Habitat (Biotope)	Peacocks	Peahens	Type of biotope
Bithdi	2	6	Arid area village
Nimbadi	10	4	-do-
Bana	8	4	-do-
Sursagar	7	5	Average green village
Chammu	7	7	-do-
Pio	11	16	Encugh food grain fed by man
Raikabagh	4	8	-do-
Umed Bhavan	5	8	-do-

TABLE - II

Sex ratio of six months old brood observed in 1979 at various biotopes.

Serial Number	Male	Female
1	1	3
2	2	2
3	1	1
4	-	1
5	1	1
6	1	3
7.	1	4
8.	1	3
9	2	3
10	1	2

***

Prasad*

THE CHIPKO MOVEMENT :

A small dispute over the right to forest produce, in an Uttarakhand village has grown into a mighty Conservation movement. The Chipko movement takes its name from the villagers decision to hug the trees of the forests rather have cut down by the contractor's axe.

--- Neeraja Chowdhury.

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B O O K P O S T

TO

From:
CONVENOR

I: 39 - 57

MAYURA

Newsletter of the Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh

Vol.I. OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1980 No.3 - 4

CONSERVATION - NOT DESTRUCTION

The ancient Indian ashrams in forests were sanctuaries of allsforms of life, which were in perfect harmony with nature. Unfortunately, in the recent past this concept and respect for nature was lost resulting in indiscriminate destruction of forests and its fauna. The promulgation of "Wildlife Protection Act of 1972" by our parliament gave much needed impetus to the efforts being made by all nature lovers and wildlife conservationists in the protection of forests and its fauna.

The Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh is an organisation striving to create awareness among public - young and old - about the importance of birds in the ecosystem. It has also been trying to identify potential refuges of resident and migratory birds around Hyderabad. In this context, the club feels privileged to associate itself with the celebration of "Wildlife Week" aimed at creating conservation consciousness among the citizens.

The bird lovers of the country are much enthusiastic about the proposed 'International Bustard Symposium' to be held at Jaipur (Rajasthan) from November 1-3, 1980 and to explore the ways and means to save the Bustards from extinction. Similar efforts needs to be made to save other equally endangered bird species.

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BIRD WATCHING NEAR HYDERABAD AND IN VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT

By
Sudhir Vyas, IFS

-I

I had the opportunity to stay in Andhra Pradesh for five months in 1978. I spent the whole of April at Hyderabad (where I was stationed at the National Institute for Rural Development, Rajendranagar), and from May to September I was in Visakhapatnam District. This was an unequalled opportunity to do some intensive bird watching, and I spent as much time as I could with binoculars around my neck. Here I would like to mention some of my more interesting observations.

HYDERABAD: At the village of Rajendranagar near N.I.R.D. bicycles were available cheaply on hire, and we covered much ground on these. Behind N.I.R.D. were low rocky hills with sparse bush cover and typical denizens here were red-winged bush-larks, little brown doves, Indian Pipits, Rufous-fronted wren-warblers, Sykes Crested larks and common babblers. Three Great Horned Owls shared a disused quarry with a family of jackals with three cubs. Every evening they would emerge, sit silhouetted against the sky and call. Below the hill was flatter ground, with yellow-wattled lapwings, Indian Sandgrouse, Rufous-backed and Great Grey Shrikes and Ioras. The area has to large dammed lakes, Himayatsagar and the Mir Alam Tank, and numerous smaller tanks. A rocky stream flows off from Himayatsagar, and on either side is rice cultivation and gardens. Himayatsagar has almost no cover in the form of marshes and reedbeds - it was the favoured haunt of Grey Herons, Egrets, Little Ring-plovers and great and little cormorants. A big flock of little Indian Pratincoles frequented the farther side of the lake and were fascinating to watch as they hunted in the evenings. Storks were represented by the open-bill and the white-necked. The rocky stream below the dam produced a little green heron and brown fish owls. Mir Alam Tank has its quota of pheasant tailed Jacanas and chestnut bitterns, also a darter and little cormorants etc. The isolated gardens along the stream and babool groves had southern black birds, paradise flycatchers and tickells blue fly-

contd..2..

catchers. All these, especially the first and last are birds of thick woodland or forest; how they take up residence in these isolated groves surrounded by open country is remarkable. The same can be said of a (wild) crested Serpent eagle, white browed bulbuls and black-naped blue flycatchers in the Nehru Zoological Park. This, incidentally, is a nice place to watch birds in for those who cannot go outside the city often; I saw a beautiful plaintive cuckoo in the chestnut phase hunting insects close to the ground amongst lotus stems and leaves.

In April in Hyderabad, migration was in progress, and nearing its end. Garganey were passing through in large numbers, and also Ruddy shelduck. These were the only two migratory duck I saw. Cotton Teal were abundant in most of the tanks, large or small, and some lesser whistling teal in Mir Alam. Kestrels and Harriers were present in the first half of April, then they vanished. Very interesting was a small flock of grey necked buntings (Emberiza buchanani) behind N.I.R.C. in earl April, and also a female blue-throated flycatcher in the Zoo. Other interesting records that I must mention before I shift to Visakhapatnam are Painted Sandgrouse which is probably a sparse resident around N.I.R.D. They came at dusk to drink from a roadside pond between NIRD and Himayatsagar, always singly, and never more than one or two in an evening. Typical time in April:6.20 p.m., Just when Indian Nightjars begin to call. A pair of Tawny Eagles was resident on a battered Palmyra Palm near the N.I.R.D. campus, one was dark, the other pale, and they provided a good study of the variability of the species. An 'Aquila' Eagle seen south of the Godavari is almost certain to be the Tawny; in the North, the presence of three or four more aquila species makes certain identification impossible. A pair of short-toed Eagles was also resident in the area. Every evening they would fly west, presumably to roost may be they had a nest there. I saw a Red-headed Merlin once, but missed the lagger.

contd..3..

One Question: Does the small green billed malcoha occur around Hyderabad? This is bird I searched for in Andhra Pradesh, but failedd to locate. Also is it normal for ~~in Andhra, but failed~~ streaked weaver-birds to begin nesting as early as April around Hyderabad? Nest building was in full swing when I was there.

(to be continued in next issue)

Correspondence from Dr. Salim Ali.

EFFECT OF RECENT SOLAR ECLIPSE ON BIRD BEHAVIOUR

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It is encouraging to read of the activities of the Birdwatchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh, which I hope will continue to grow and prosper with the years.

The weakest point about all the observations of the effect on birds of the recent solar eclipse in many parts of the country is - I think - that they were made mostly by persons of widely divergent competence in meaningful bird watching. Many of these were individuals without a background of watching bird behaviour in normal times, but who had suddenly got worked up to recording the reactions of birds under the highly abnormal conditions of theeclipse. Thus they were not really qualified to make an objective comparative assessment. However, it was a useful exercise to the extent that it roused an interest in many that would otherwise have remained dormant. It is possible that in a few of such ' Newcomers ' the interest may, hopefully, become permanent.

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Help in protection and conservation of valuable fauna and flora - they are part of our National Heritage.

NESTING ACTIVITIES OF THE BAY BACKED SHRIKE - LODI GARDENS: NEW DELHI (PART-II) By N.S.TYABJI:

On the morning of 11th May 1962, just 2 days before we were to leave Delhi again, I discovered a nest sited in a babool about 6½' above ground level; the tree itself was just 3' from the edge of a well frequented path within the park. I kept a watch on this nest from 1415 - 1615 on 11.5.62 and 0714 - 0805on 12.5.62. During this period of observation all the feed was picked up from within a well defined area whose boundaries seemed to be determined by certain trees. The diagram will give an idea of the size and shape of the actual forage area - I am not using the term 'Territory', as the periods of observation would hardly justify a categorical assumption in this regard. I now produce my Notes in full:-

11.5.62: Time: 0720

0720 - Female bird seen in nest. Male first seen near nest and then fetching food for mate 2 or 3 times. Once when F left nest for about 5 minutes, M at once appeared near nest but seemed uncertain and flew off in same direction as F. After a short time both birds returned to nest together and whilst F moved in over the eggs, M remained nearby for a while and left.

At this time, about 0730, I am certain the eggs had not hatched as there was no activity in nest and M bird only brought food for his mate.

I visited the nest again that afternoon and the next morning and give below a chronogical account of the behaviour of the parent birds as observed.

11.5.62: Time: 1415 - 1615

1415 - Bird seen sitting in nest (presumably F)
1430 - M arrived at nest with worm which it transferred to F who got up very deliberately from the nest to take it.

NOTE:Nest about 4" deep and 4" across, made of grassy strands plastered externally with cow webs and lined with piece of cloth. Birds rump and tail overhang nest. Bird seen to stand up every few minutes but crouch down again as soon as it heard sounds of approaching feet on road hardly 3' away.

1445 - M arrived at nest with a winged insect. Was at the nest for a few seconds before F took insect from M's bill and left nest with it. M remained at edge of nest for about ½ minute and left.
1450 - M returned to nest (without food) and remained on the edge.
1454 - M left; F returned to nest and kept standing in nest till 1458.

contd.

1458 - M returned with insect, transferred to F and left
1507 - M with food; F stood up in nest and took insect
1510 - M with food, transferred to F
1515 - M with food; F got up and swallowed fecal sac. After this F kept standing with spread swings to protect young from direct sun. It seemed young had recently been hatched. No feeding of young observed.
1520 - M with food; transferred to F who fed young for first time
1525 - F left as M arrived, hovered about nest and left
1527 - M arrived at untended nest and fed young
1530 - M at nest again with food for young
1533 - F returned to nest without food
1535 - M arrived with food, transferred to F who fed one young; the worm was swallowed after considerable travail
1538 - F left nest
1545 - M arrived with food and fed young
1550 - M & F returned to nest together; M with food which was transferred to F who fed 2 young, then stood in nest with wings spread against sun.
1600 - M to nest with food for F only which continued to stand in nest with spread wings against westring sun.
1615 - M to nest with food transferred to F who feeds young. NOTE: Number of nestlings four (4).

12.5.62;Time:0714 - 0805

0714 - F in nest facing west
0715 - M arrived with worm, alighted near nest; flew away to nearby tree and swallowed worm
0717 - M arrived at nest with food, transferred it to F which fed young; M left immediately
0720 - F left nest
0722 - F arrived at nest, looked within and left nest - untended.
0724 - F returned to nest and sat facing west
0725 - M with food transferred to F which stood up in nest and fed young
0729 - M with winged insect sat on edge of nest; F turned her head took insect and fed young, swallowing what was left.
0731 - M with food; F fed young
0735 - As above
0737 - As at 0731
0739 - F left nest
0740 - M with food, fed young
0741 - As at 0740
0741.5 - F returned to nest but sat on edge
0742 - F left nest again
0744 - F with food followed by M with food; both fed young. F sat in nest after feeding, facing east.
0745 - F left nest
0748 - M with food; fed young
0749 - Both birds at nest with food, F arriving first. Fed young and F took up position in nest.
0750 - F left nest
0752 - 0755 - 0757 - 0800 - M with food; fed young.

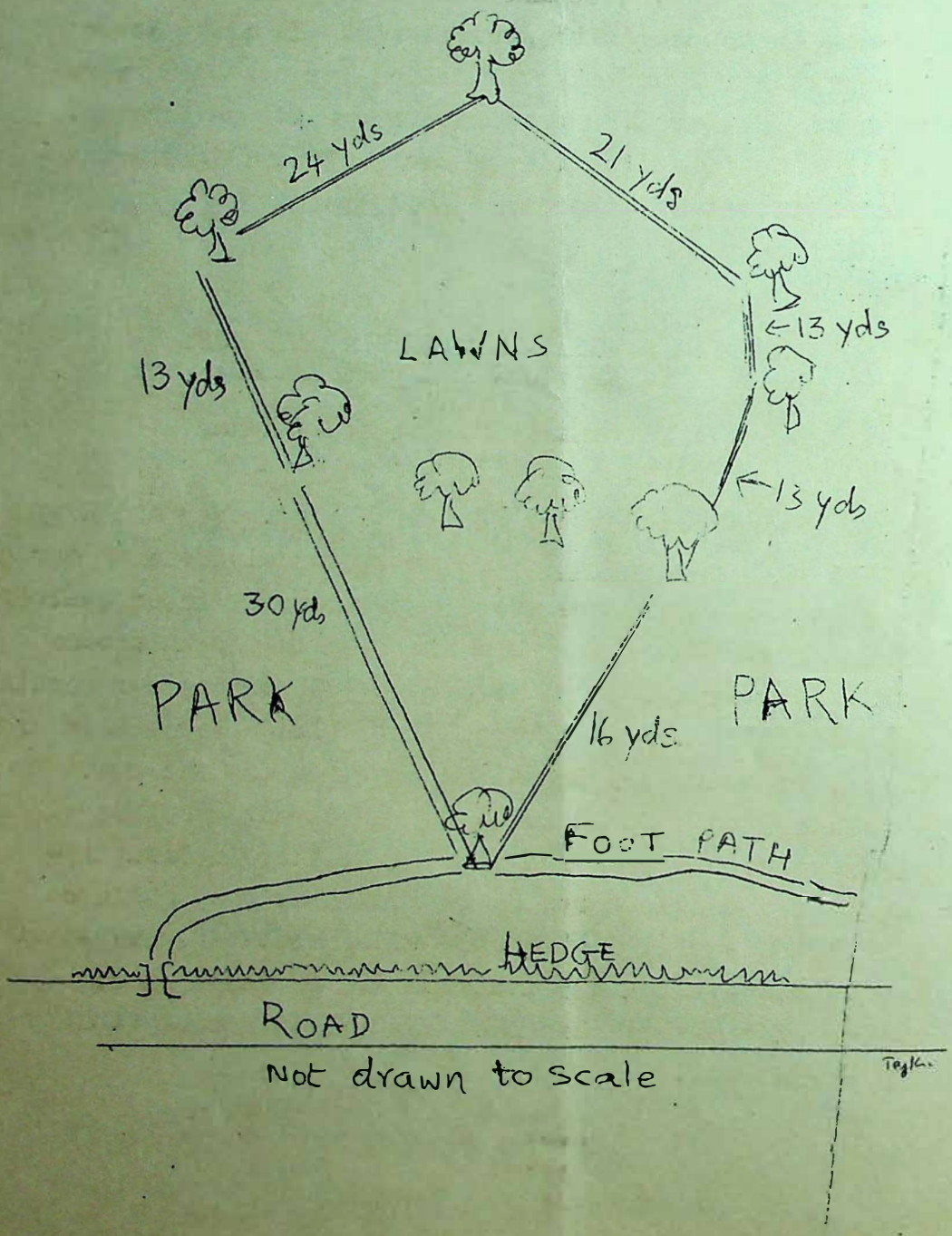
contd..

0802 - Both birds at nest with food and both left after feeding young
0804 - F returned to nest with food and fed young
0805 - F settled in nest

I was greatly upset at not being able to continue these observations over the next few days, preferably upto the point when the young reached the fledgling stage. It would have been fascinating to witness the phenomena gradual growth and transformation into the 'miracle' which is a bird when viewed in all its multi-faceted aspects.

DIAGRAM

FEEDING AREA - (TERRITORY?)



THE SIRKEER CUCKOO IN MAREDPALLY

HYDERABAD

By

M.S.Kulkarny

I sighted a Sirkeer Cuckoo (Taccoua beschenaulti) also known as Jungli Tota, in a small garden near East Maredpally. It had a heavy brown tail and fine black streak-like shafts on its back. After sometime it changed its position from a high branch of a tree to a lower branch from where it displayed it bright cherry red and yellow hooked bill.

After some-time it flew off and I followed its call 'Kek,Kek,Kerek'. The Sirkeer Cuckoo climbed from a bush to a nearby tree and started hopping from one branch to another with perfectness. In my tw hours of observation, I saw that it fed on insects which were sighted by it on the same tree where it was sitting. After some-time it suddenly took a long flight and vanished into the gathering of big trees.

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SIGHTING OF REDHEADED BUNTING AND ROSY PASTOR IN RAJENDRANAGAR, HYDERABAD.

Dr.N. Shivanarayana and S.Tej Kumar

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Redheaded Bunting (Emberiza bruniceps) and Rosy Pastor (Sturnus roseus) are two winter visitors to our subcontinent. Both the species arrive the winter quarters during August-September and are seen in flocks around cultivated areas. On 15 November 1980, during our regular bird watching in the Agricultural College Farm, Rajendranagar, we spotted 5 Redheaded Buntings (2 males and 3 females) on a Babul tree. As we had not seen the birds previously, we had some difficulty in identifying them a distance but as we went near they could be identified easily with a pair of binoculars. The same day we saw a flock (15 individuals) of Rosy pastor flying over us and then they settled on ground about 100 yards away.

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BEHAVIOUR OF KOELS AT THE TIME OF SOLAR ECLIPSE ON 16.2.1980

By E. Venugopal Rao

I was the Conservator of Forests, Kurnool at that time. The office and the residence of the Conservator of Forests are located in a sprawling ground of about 4 acres. The area is full of trees.

Koel is one of the common birds in the compound. One of the early risers in the morning is Koel. Every morning, a solitary Koel calls out in bass voice as the thick wraps of darkness begin to peal off.

Again Koels are one of the earliest to return to its perch before the evening wears off and they call to one another in shrill voice in quick succession with an equally quick response from their companions sitting on distant trees.

The day of the Solar Eclipse dawned as usual for the world of birds.

As the Eclipse commenced, there was no commotion among the birds in the compound. But when the Eclipse progressed and the conditions of advanced evening were simulated through the Eclips, Koel was the first to give its call.

But to this time there was no chorus of calls from the other Koels as on normal evenings. A single Koel gave out its call in base voice as is done normally every morning. There was no response from other koels.

This may be because the Koels were on proying rejourn in distant places and they were taken unawares by the long shadows of the eclipsed sun.

There was a strain of uncertainty in the call of the solitary Koel - There was no spontaneity - as the change from sun light to evening shadows was sudden and the koel was bewildered by sudden advent of evening.

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CERTAIN OBSERVATIONS ON THE JUVENILES OF ROSERINGED PARAKEET Psittacula krameri (Scopoli)

By

Miss Abida Wahab

Two years ago I made observations on the behaviour and breeding habits of Roseringed Parakeet and its nestlings in Ramanthapur and Kothapet villages adjoining Hyderabad city. In Ramanthapur a closed area of about 12 acres has 100 toddy trees, 26 date palm and about 16 coconut trees. Out of those 7 trees were having parakeet nests. Whereas in Kothapet village which lies on the other side of the river Musi has more trees than what we see in Ramanthapur. Therefore number of parakeet nests is also more.

There is a general feeling that parakeet are not to be distrubed. This situation posed problem at times to remove the eggs and nestlings from the nest to study their structure and weight.

So far observations made on the behaviour of Roseringed parakeet are largely on adults. Field observations collected during this study reveal some interesting features on the behaviour of juveniles.

Breeding season of Roseringed parakeet starts here from November end lasts upto May end of the next year. This shows they breed five months in a year. The number of eggs laid is 1-5. Nests are made at a height between 15' to 35' in dry toddy trees or green coconut trees.

Male and female take part in making a new nest. Not always they make a new nest but often lay in the nests made by other parrots or other species such as wood pecker. One nest could be used three times in the same season by three different pairs. Same nest could be used by Indian Roller and also by Indian Myna for egg laying. Nest is a vertical hole opening of which is round and small enough to pass the parakeet at a time. They fill bottom of the nest with dry grass and make it soft like a cushion. Height plays a part in survival as the lower nests are liable to be usurped by other species. The nesting success in relation to height can be a

contd..

base for control measures if my observation is correct.

The eggs of parakeet are white and oval in shape and measure 3.2 cm long; 2.7 cm broad and weight 9.7 grams on average. Incubation period is 22-24 days. Only female incubates the eggs and approach of any other bird by moving the head in the direction of the intruder. She seems to refuse food during incubation. However male occasionally relieves the female. If eggs are removed from the nest she will continue sitting inside for 2-3 days. If nestlings are removed she will continue visiting the nest for first few days.

In newly hatched nestlings the eyes are closed. In the course of 3-4 days they open slowly. Beak is orangish yellow, short, heavy compared to the body and deeply hooked. Head and body naked and red in colour. The plumage of the nestling is not uniform pale green. The upper side of the wings and tail were dark green and lower side of wings and tail were yellow in colour.

Weights of the nestlings are of little interest unless they are correlated with other parametres such as availability of food, distance between feeding grounds and nest, which would affect the number feedings, number of young hatched and sibling competition. However the body weight of one week old nestlings in Ramanthapur village is 81 grams. First of all wings and tail, develop black roots and this is followed by back and abdomen. At the age of 10 days the weight of the nestling is 86 grams. Wings and tail start developing green roots. Heads sides of abdomen and upper arm developing black roots. Beak is orangish red in the middle and yellow at the border. No self feeding, eyes wide open and crawl on the ground holding the ground with the beak, Length from the tips of the beak to the tip of the tail is 12 cms.

At the age of 12 days the weight of the nestling is 94 grams and length 18 cms. When they were 21 days,

contd..

old they weighed 117.5 grams and 22 cms long. Beak is dark arangish red, Head neck, upper side of wings, back and tail covered with dark gree feathers and tail feathers are yellowish green underneath and at sides.

At the age of 23 days nestlings were found infested with mites in the nest which was located about 35' above the ground. This infestation of mites was absent during earlier observations. The temperature outside the nest was ranging between 29°C to 15°C. R.H.was 33%. Nestlings were removed from the nest and all the posts were collected carefully with camel hair brush and transferred into a tube containing 70% ethyl alcohol. The mite has been identified by commanwealth Institute of Entomology,London as Ornithonyssus bunsa (Berl) of order Acarina. They were reported earlier on Indian Roller and now found on Rose-ringed Parakeet.

One month old nestlings climb the wall of the nest They are completely covered with green feathers. Now they were removed from the nest and kept in a cage 13"/10" to study further development.

A yellow ring appeared around the neck at the age of 32 days (in captivity). Now self feeding started. This yellow band changed into a black band in one year. First of all the mandible became black which later spread around the neat. This black band changed into a rose pink collar in one month. At the age of 13 months the juvenile had changed into full fledged rose-parrot. There is a general feeling that rose ring appears earlier than 13 months in the field conditions and nestling start reproducing in the following year since their growth was noted to be seemings faster in the field than in captivity.

***

Table-(1)

WEIGHT OF PARAKEET EGGS

Sl.No.	Length	Breadth	Weight
1.	3.3 cm	2.7 cm	5 gramms
2.	3.3 cm	2.6 cm	7 gramms
3.	3.2 cm	2.65 cm	5 gramms
4.	3.3 cm	2.7 cm	10 gramms
5.	3.4 cm	2.9 cm	14 gramms
6.	3.2 cm	2.9 cm	11 gramms
7.	3.3 cm	2.9 cm	14 gramms
8.	3.2 cm	2.9 cm	10 gramms
9.	3.2 cm	2.5 cm	5 gramms
10.	3.2 cm	2.4 cm	4.5 gramms
11.	3.0 cm	2.3 cm	4.8 gramms
12.	3.2 cm	2.7 cm	10 gramms
13.	3.2 cm	2.65 cm	7 gramms
14.	3.2 cm	2.8 cm	11 gramms
15.	3.2 cm	2.7 cm	10 gramms
16.	3.4 cm	2.7 cm	10 gramms
17.	3.2 cm	2.8 cm	13 gramms
G.Total	55.0 cm	45.80 cm	151.3 gramms
Mean	3.2 cm	2.7 cm	8.9 gramms

Table (2) **Growth chart of Nestlings of Roseringed Parakeet.**

2.

S.No.																
Age	25 days	7 days	21	26	29	7	10	21	26	29	7	10	21	26	29	7
Weight	130 gr.	98 grms.	129	86	116	60	66.5	100.5	70.5	88.5	89	97.5	121	85	107	76
Length	21 cms.	16 cms.	21			14 cm.	15 cm	17			14	17	21			17
Beak	red with Orange border.	Orange strong hooked	Deep orengish red.	1.6	1.6	orange strong hooked	orange yellow border	orengish red with yellow border.	1.5	1.5	orange strong hooked	orange with yellow border		1.5 orengish red & yellow border.	1.5	orange strong hooked.
tarsus				1.5	1.6				1.5	1.5				1.5	1.5	
Wing	green & yellow border.	Black	Green	14	14	black	grey	green nish	11.6	11.5	black	green	green	14.4	15	black.
Tail	green & yellow border.	black with green roots.	Green	4	4.6	black green roots	grey	gree- nish	2.7	2.8	black green roots	green	green	5.2	5.5	black with green roots.

S.No.												
Age	10	21	26	29	8	11	8	11	8	11	8	11
Weight	81	119	86	113	70	102	98	108	55	107	88	98
Length	18	20										
Beak	orange with yellow border.	orengish red with yellow border.	1.6	1.7	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.2
tarsus			1.5	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.5	1.3	1.3
Wing	black	green	12.3	13.8	6.2	7.8	7.4	8.5	4.8	8.2	6.8	7.2
Tail	black	green	3.5	4.2	0.6	0.7	0.6	1c m	0.4	1c m	0.6	0.6

STUDY OF MAGPIE ROBIN

By

M.Kamal Naidu,IFS

I used to see a pair of Magpie Robins singing away gaily on the roof of my house in early January. Soon one day I found always one and rarely two of them. This urged me to search for their nest if any in the vicinity. Then on the 19th of January, I found as I approached a heap of rubbish, stacked away on the roof, one of the Magpie Robins screaming and screeching. As I approached closer to the heap the missing one flow out of the heap. I delved into the heap of tins, bottles and what not and found a cosily made nest of feathers, strings, coir rope pieces and grass, were nestled 3 pale greenish, reddish brownblotched and mottled eggs 2.0 cm long and 1.5 cm wide. They must have been laid in the last few days prior to my discovery.

Every day thereafter I watched the nest and on the evening of 27th one egg hatched into a fleshy mass of a chick. Next morning all the 3 chicks were hatched and were covered with a fluffy down almost 3/4 cm long, On 31st their eyes remained closed. On 30th the primaries were seen emerged and was about 0.3 cm long. On 31st the primaries grew to 0.5 cm and the outer secondaries were seen emerging and so also the tail primaries. The number of primaries and secondaries numbered 8 and 9 respectively and those on the tail 11. Some feathers were seen emerging as needle on the rump and on abdomen. The eyes continued to be closed. The rate of growth of feathers were very rapid. On 1st February the primaries were 1 cm long, the outer and inner secondaries slightly less and yet needle life. The greater and primary wing coverts began appearing, the tail primaries measured 0.5 cm. In one hour from 8.00 am to 8.00 am the parents were seen to feed the chicks 14 times after collecting insects from the adjoining recently ploughed field by pecking 7-8 times (apparently collected 7-8 insects)

On 2nd needle like feathers appeared on the heads, neck and back and eyes opened slightly. On 4th the needle of primary and secondaries were seen to burst open to

contd..

feathers, the primaries were from 2.6-2.8 cm, the tail feathers 1.6-1.8 cm, the beak was 1 cm long, mid-toe 1.6 cm. On 6th I was shocked to find only one chick in the nest and on 7th I found them scattered about amidst the heap of debries. Again on 10th they all were not to be seen, but neither were the parents perturbed about it but seemed normal in their food collection. On making a thorough search I found the chicks had left their nest and harboured themselves inside the rain drain pipe. Now on 11th their primaries had grown to 5.6 cm and their tail to 6.2 cm. Before, I could measure their beaks and toes the chick took flight, surprising me of the flight distance, accompanied by its parents as protection angles. I ran after it to the fields assuming it will not be able to fly up, but as soon as I neared it, it took flight and cleared a hedge 6 ft. high. At this stage the tail and wings were about half the length of the adults.

I looked upon them and bid them good-bye, and all the best in their future lives. Thus I was able to observe this family of Magpie Robin closely from 19th Jan. to 11th February,1980.

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SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - PART-III

By

Pushp Kumar

Cormorants : Phalacrocoracidae: ~~These~~ There species of Cormorants are reported from Andhra Pradesh. Cormorants are found in most districts in small irrigation tanks to large reservoirs as well as in brackish waters along the coast. Cormorants have glossy black plumage and for this reason alone are compared to crows. Since they are gregarious water birds they are referred to as water crows or in Telugu 'Neetikaki'. They "fly" under water ~~xxx~~ using their wings. However surprisingly their plumage unlike that of ducks is not well adapted to water and gets "wet" Cormorants therefore are seen mostly out of water on boulders and rocks or on trees "drying out" their plumage before the next plunge. They nest in gregarious colonies on trees alongwith other water birds like Herons, Storks, Ibises, Egrets etc. Though fish eaters Cormorants are

contd..

believed to feed mainly on uneconomic fishes and contribute to growth of the economic ones. (

Large Cormorant: Phalacrocorax carbo (Linnaeus)
Telugu name: Bonta Kaki, Urdu: Pan - Kowwa, found practically through-out the state though not as gregariously as the other two species. A group is practically resident in the Osmansagar near Hyderabad and is often seen on the rock in the middle swimming themselves.

Indian Shag: Phalacrorax (Nusicollis)
Telugu : Neetikaki or Chinna Bonta Kaki: Urdu:Pan-Kowwa. A smaller bird than the large cormorant, the shag is found throughout the state in most tanks and waters, it is often confused with the little cormorant in whose company it is also found.

Little Cormorant: Phalacrocorax niger (Vieillot)
Telugu : Neetikaki, Urdu : Pan-Kowwa. A much smaller bird found throughout the state in gregarious herds. Nests Nelapattu Sanctuary in Nellore Dist. alongwith White Ibises in Pembarti in Warangal Dist with assorted egrets.

Darter: One species of darter or snake bird is found in the state in most waters, The long curving neck ending in a sharp pointed beak gives the bird, especially while swimming when the body is submerged and only the darting neck held above water, a snake like apperance which is also recognised in the local name of Pamu bathu . on literally snakeduck or snake-bird. This bird is also assigned a separate family anhingidae by some authorities.

Darter or Snake-bird : Anhinga rufa pennant: Telugu Pamu batu, Urdu:Pan - Dabi: Found in most reservoirs and lakes especially with large trees around. It is seen in the Osmansagar near Hyderabad as well as in the Pulicat lake near Madras. In 1963 to 1966 over a hundred darters nested on the large Tamarind trees on the Island in the Mir-Alam Tank., adjacent to the zoo in Hyderabad, The Darters regularly commuted between the tank and the bird sanctuary set up in the zoo. However the trees were lopped by villagers and later cut down, and the snake birds went away never to return. Only one or two forlorn birds could be seen for a few years more on the unpolluted waters of the tank. Thereafter with the fishermen commencing their operations in the tank even these have gone away.

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